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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

Preserve

33rd YEAR

May 10, 1976

NO. 19



Early summer apples are especially good in applesauce and pies because they're likely to be juicy, tart, and quick-cooking according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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An apple, eaten raw, makes a low-calorie snack or dessert.

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Most varieties of apples will keep several months if stored at lower temperatures, according to USDA marketing specialists.

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Protect cut apples from darkening by mixing with fruit — lemon, orange, grapefruit, or pineapple — before adding other ingredients.

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Colors add zest — Just add one strawberry — a fancy pineapple spear, or a peach half to dress up a salad.

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Water-packed fruits help dieters cut calories.

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ON SEWING AT HOME

Sewing — a bygone art? No way—approximately four billion dollars a year is spent on fabrics, patterns, machines and notions in the United States. About 41 million persons in this country probably do some home sewing, according to a nationwide survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Saving money is a major reason for home sewing — but other reasons figure into the picture including the desire for garments that "fit better" and for "better quality and workmanship" according to the survey. Home sewing probably pays best for persons with wants or needs that are not met by ready to wear garments in their price range, for persons who can construct garments for lower prices than the price of comparable clothing, or for persons who can spread the cost of sewing equipment over many garments.

Sometimes people who sew at home often do not include costs of a growing collection of fabrics stored in the attic or put in the closet for some vague future use, garments started but never completed, items finished but not worn, and a sewing machine and other expensive equipment that may sit idle for months at a time.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (March 1976)

	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate- cost-plan	Liberal plan
FAMILIES				
Young couple.....	\$22.10	\$28.90	\$36.30	\$43.70
Elderly couple.....	19.80	25.60	31.80	38.20
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	31.40	40.80	50.90	61.20
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	37.90	49.30	61.80	74.40
INDIVIDUALS*				
Women				
20-54 years.....	9.00	11.70	14.60	17.50
55 years and over.....	8.20	10.50	13.00	15.50
Men				
20-54 years.....	11.10	14.60	18.40	22.20
55 years and over.....	9.80	12.80	15.90	19.20
Children				
1-2 years.....	5.10	6.60	8.10	9.70
3-5 years.....	6.20	7.90	9.80	11.80
6-8 years.....	7.90	10.20	12.80	15.40
9-11 years.....	9.90	12.80	16.00	19.30
Girls 12-19 years.....	9.40	12.10	15.00	18.00
Boys 12-14 years.....	10.60	13.60	17.10	20.50
15-19 years.....	11.70	15.00	18.80	22.70

* Cost of food at home for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

Note: Single copies of papers describing USDA's thrifty food plan (used in setting the coupon allotment in the Food Stamp Program) and the three more costly plans, on which these costs are based, are available from the Consumer and Food Economics Institute, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES VII

FOOD: WASTE -- STORAGE — SAFETY

Did you know that one slice of bread wasted everyday adds up to more than 22 loaves of bread purchased — but not eaten — during the year? Good habits in the kitchen can help avoid waste, according to Dr. Evelyn Johnson, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Check your own habits by taking this ten point quiz —

- Do you...use standard cups and spoons for measuring all ingredients?
- ...roast meats at low temperatures (325°) to prevent excessive shrinkage?
- ...use the skin and outer leaves of fruits and vegetables? (they contain important nutrients)
- ...leave the skin on potatoes, carrots, apples and pears for baking, or scalloping? (for scalloping with peelings on, slice the pieces thinner than usual and the skins will seem more tender)
- ...cut or shred vegetables and fruits just before serving to prevent vitamin loss?
- ...prepare only the amount of food that can be eaten before it spoils
- ...cut slices of bread in fourths for children? (it goes further and helps prevent waste)
- ...watch those leftovers? (don't save something and not use it)
- ...save bread pieces? (they can be used as crumbs for topping casseroles)
- ...have a special place for "leftovers"? (so they won't be forgotten, but used)

ON STORAGE

Unlike the homes of yesteryear with their large food pantries, modern-day homes usually do not have storage space to keep food supplies on hand. Putting "Food by" was important in the "old days" but it may not be practical now due to the changing life styles where we must carefully weigh space in terms of weekly income. Many families cannot put food into "storage facilities" because they need to buy-as- they-go with a weekly or semi-weekly pay check. Therefore, today, careful planning and learning how to store food wisely is important according to Dr. Johnson.

Freezing is a convenience. You can prepare meals ahead, eat garden vegetables the year around, make use of leftovers, and cut down on shopping trips. However, it is, sometimes, but not always, a budget-saver, according to Dr. Johnson when citing figures of \$30 to \$50 a year to operate a freezer shows that a need for considering benefits of freezer storage vs. cost of same.

- Do you...overstock on items to freeze? If so, you are eliminating space for other foods that might be more useful to your food plan.
- ...use the food on a rotating basis? If not labeled properly you may not "turn your food over" as promptly as you should.
- ...remember to freeze only top quality food? You get out just what you put in to it.
- ...know that a freezer operates most efficiently when about 3/4th full—and at zero degrees or lower.

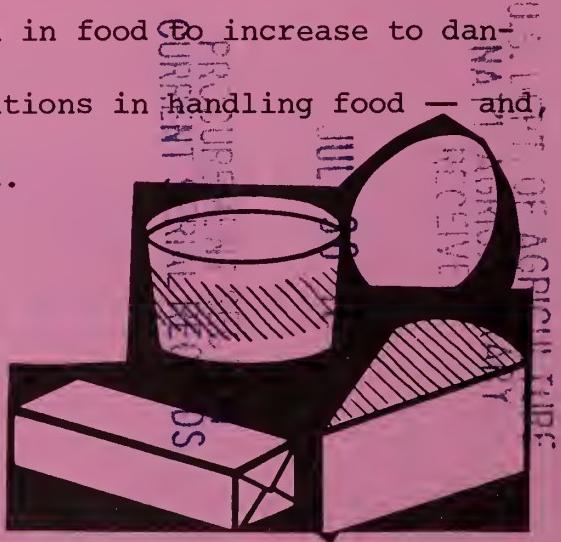
FOOD: WASTE — STORAGE — SAFETY (CON'T)

The approximate cost of operating a 12 cubic foot freezer filled to capacity once during the year (360 pounds of food) would cost about 24¢ per pound. This is based on depreciation, return on investment foregone at 3%, repairs, electricity, packaging etc.

Dr. Johnson feels that the two "keys" to serving your family good quality fresh or frozen food are timing and proper storage. Timing, first, because consumers need to go immediately home from the store and put their perishable food purchases in the proper storage places — refrigerator or freezer. Quality of the food is often sacrificed if you do not do this promptly. Thus, it is important to remember that food should be properly packaged, adequately cared for, and maintained at the lowest temperature until used in a time sequence (according to USDA frozen food timetable).

According to Dr. Johnson, families should look at food preservation as a way to save food that would otherwise be lost. Families seriously considering the economic aspects of home gardening and food preservation might find it helpful to analyze all the anticipated costs for their specific situation.

Keeping food safe to eat is one of the most important contributions a homemaker can make for the family, states the USDA nutritionist. Lack of sanitation, insufficient cooking, and improper storage can allow bacteria in food to increase to dangerous levels. Heed the warnings and take simple precautions in handling food — and, it will pay-off because it pays to keep food safe to eat.



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